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PREVIEW

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EVALUATION OF IBN MADA?'S CRITICISM OF THE ARAB GRAMMARIANS

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PREVIEW

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EVALUATION OF IBN MAḌĀ?'S
CRITICISM OF THE ARAB GRAMMARIANS

by
Naji Abdeljabbar Abdeljaber

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
(Near Eastern Studies)
in The University of Michigan
1985

Doctoral Committee:

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PREVIEW

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1985

For

My wife, Reema, for her love and faith,
my children, Aladean, Abdeljabbar, Rania, and Sajidah
for their understanding and cooperation,
my parents, relatives, and friends,
who have been waiting for our return for five years.
To all of them I dedicate this work.

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TRANSLITERATION

The transliteration used in the present study is that of the International Journal of the Middle East Studies, except for the Arabic letter ʿayn (ع) which is represented by "c" in this work.

<u>Arabic Letter</u>	<u>Transliteration</u>
ا	ā
آ	ʾ
ب	b
ت	t
ث	th
ج	j
ح	ḥ
خ	kh
د	d
ذ	dh
ر	r
ز	z
س	s
ش	sh
ص	s
ض	ḍ
ط	ṭ

ظ
ع
غ
ف
ق
ك
ل
م
ن
و
ي
ا

ز
c
gh
f
q
k
l
m
n
h
w,ū
y,i
al-

Short vowels: a, i, u

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I will discuss the research problem, the present study, Ibn Maḍāʾ's life and works, and the review of literature.

I. The Problem

After the revelation of the Qurʾān and the spread of Islam, several religious, social, and linguistic factors¹ prompted a group of grammarians² to start thinking of standardizing the Arabic literary language by setting up its rules. Thus, the foundation phase,³ which started with the efforts of al-Duʿalī⁴ and his students, was a preface to the fruits to grow through the works of al-Khalīl⁵ (d. 177/794) and his disciple Sībawayhi⁶ (d. 188/805).

Sībawayhi wrote his remarkable book al-kitāb 'The Book' in which he set up the primary notions of Arabic grammatical rules and many of the principles⁷ of the study of Arabic grammar. After that, a group of grammarians⁸ in Baṣra followed Sībawayhi and adopted his basic principles and started illustrating his theoretical concepts and practicing his grammatical rules. Moreover, a group of grammarians⁹ in Kūfa which were led by al-Kisāʾī (d.

189/804) started to dispute points of grammar¹⁰ with the Baṣrans, which then caused both schools to try to unify and codify their invented rules and to present their arguments, proofs, and sources of the study of the Arabic language.¹¹

The grammarians studied some grammatical features like iʿrāb¹² 'case and mood inflection,' ʿamal¹³ 'regency,' iḍmār¹⁴ 'suppression,' ḥaḍhf¹⁴ 'deletion,' and mutaʿalliqāt¹⁵ 'suspensives.' To explain these phenomena, they adopted some theoretical concepts such as qiyās¹⁶ 'analogy,' taqdīr¹⁷ 'suppletive insertion,' taʿlīl¹⁸ 'the seeking of motives,' and ijmāʿ¹⁹ 'unanimous agreement.'

Ibn Maḍāʾ al-Qurṭubī (513 A.H. to 593 A.H./1118 A.D. to 1196 A.D.), who was of the Zāhirite²⁰ school, wrote a book entitled al-radd ʿalā al-nuḥā 'Response to the Grammarians' in which he criticized some of the grammarians' concepts.²¹ He believed that the grammarians confused the principles of grammar on the one hand and the principles of fiqh²² 'jurisprudence' on the other. Thus, for Ibn Maḍāʾ, the contemporary grammatical system of his time had become blended with superfluous, unnecessary, and useless elements.²³

Accordingly, he wrote his book, Response to the Grammarians, with the following primary goals:²⁴

1. To get rid of the superfluous and useless elements in the grammar.

2. To simplify Arabic grammar.

3. To present grammar without regency and unconvincing assumptions.

4. To apply a surface structure approach to the study of Arabic grammar, in the fashion of the Ṣāḥirites.

To achieve his goals, Ibn Maḍāʾ first calls for the abolition of (1) the theory of the Ḍamīl 'regent' from the study of Arabic grammar; (2) the assuming of implicit and unnecessary words and regents; (3) the assuming of al-mutaḥalliqāt 'suspenders; (4) the assumption of al-damāʾir al-mustatira 'implicit/hidden pronouns'; (5) the unnecessary Ḍilāl 'reasons,' namely, the secondary and tertiary ones; and (6) all made-up examples which are just theoretical and are not used in reality by native speakers of Arabic.²⁵

Ibn Maḍāʾ applies his method to the following topics of Arabic grammar:

(1) al-tanāzuḥ fī al-Ḍamal 'conflict in respect to government'

(2) al-ishtighāl 'syntactic deflection'

(3) Ḍawāmil al-afḍāl al-mansūba 'regents of subjunctive verbs'

(4) al-damāʾir al-mustatira 'implicit/hidden pronouns'

II. The Present Study

Below I shall specify the goals, the importance, and the methodology of this study.

A. Aims and Goals of the Present Study

This study aims at the following goals:

1. Present and analyze the development of Arabic grammatical theory through its foundation phase and the establishment of the two major schools, namely those of Baṣra and Kūfa (See Chapter Two).

2. Analyze some primary concepts of Arabic grammar as adopted by the major schools, such as iʿrāb 'case and mood inflections,' ʿamal 'regency,' tagdīr 'suppletive insertion,' taʿlīl 'rational justifications/reasons,' and the alike (Chapter Three).

3. Present and analyze Ibn Maḍāʾi's criticism of the Arab grammarians (Chapter Four).

4. State Ibn Maḍāʾi's method of studying the Arabic language without regency (Chapter Four, Part III).

5. Compare and contrast Ibn Maḍāʾi's ideas with those of the other Arab grammarians.

6. Examine the originality of Ibn Maḍāʾi's ideas and point out the positives of his ideas to the contribution of the study of the Arabic language (Chapter Five, Part V).

7. Codify Ibn Maḍāʾ's theories into a unified system and apply that to certain aspects of Arabic grammar (Chapter Four, Part III and Chapter Five, Part III.A).

8. Evaluate Ibn Maḍāʾ's method in the light of the surface structure approach, as well as that of the grammarians' in the light of dependency grammar (Chapter Four, Part IV).

9. State Ibn Maḍāʾ's most important ideas in terms of descriptive grammar in contrast with the grammarians' prescriptive grammar (Chapter Five, Part V).

B. The Importance of This Study

The importance of the present study can be summarized as follows:

1. It will investigate in detail all ideas regarding the ambiguous phase of the foundation of the Arabic grammar before Sībawayhi.

2. This study will examine the sources on which the Arab grammarians depended to invent Arabic grammatical rules and will show how the invented rules sometimes prescriptively controlled the Arabic texts.

3. It will compare and contrast the Baṣrans' and the Kūfians' methodologies and will show how their principles and approaches, especially the Baṣrans', were affected by fiqh 'jurisprudence,' ʿilm al-kalām 'scholastic theology,' and logic.

4. This study will examine the possibility of applying Ibn Maḍāʾ's approach, in contrast with the grammarians, to particular topics of Arabic grammar.

5. It will try to explain the grammarians' approach as well as Ibn Maḍāʾ's in the light of some modern western linguistic concepts. This may lead the investigator to suggest some particular further linguistic comparisons between the grammarians on one hand and the western linguistic schools on the other.

6. From Ibn Maḍāʾ's criticism and argumentation we can determine the course which his systematization of a new grammar would take:

- a. The new grammar must be simple and plain.
- b. It must be such that it will respect the reality of speech and convey the meaning of the text.
- c. The text comes first and then the rules (not vice versa).
- d. Anything that impairs linguistic reality by introducing an extra meaning in it must be strictly shunned.
- e. The devices of regent and of assuming implicit forms must be discarded.
- f. We must avoid secondary and tertiary reasons in explaining grammatical rules and features.
- g. In applying qiyās²⁶ 'analogy' we must disregard all made-up examples which are just theoretical and not used in reality by the native speakers of Arabic.

h. And, finally, the topics of Arabic grammar should be reorganized according to the function of the grammatical categories and not according to their Camal 'regency.'

C. Methodology and Procedures of the Research

To achieve the aims and the goals of the present study, I will do the following:

1. Sketch the development of Arabic grammar and grammatical concepts based on an extensive review of the writings of the Baṣrans and the Kūfans, as well as modern western and Arab analytical studies.

2. I will utilize al-Bannā's edition of Ibn Maḍā's book primarily determine Ibn Maḍā's ideas and criticism of the Arab grammarians. In presenting both the grammarians' and Ibn Maḍā's views, I will try to explain every grammatical term with ample examples from classical Arabic and from modern standard Arabic as well.

3. When I evaluate the grammarians' method and Ibn Maḍā's in light of modern linguistics, I will compare and contrast the grammarians' regency approach and modern dependency grammar as in Robinson (1970:260) on the one hand, and Ibn Maḍā's theory and the structural-functional analysis as in the tagmemics of Cook (1969:5-9) on the other.

This does not mean, of course, that I claim that the grammarians or Ibn Maḍā were ahead of modern linguists in

adopting particular approaches (Chapter Four, Part IV); on the contrary, my concern will be to examine whether their ideas can be understood in light of modern linguistics or not, which may lead the investigator to suggest further studies for the future.²⁷

III. Ibn Maḍāʾ al-Qurṭubī: His Life and Works

A. Life of Ibn Maḍāʾ

Ibn Maḍāʾ al-Qurṭubī²⁸ (Aḥmad b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Muḥammad b. Saʿīd b. ʿĀṣim b. Maḍāʾ al-Lakhmī al-Qurṭubī) was born in 513 A.H./1118 A.D. in Cordova. He memorized the Qurʾān and learned Arabic grammar, lexicography, and literature from Ibn Mashkawāl and Ibn Saḥnūn. He studied Sībawayhi's al-kitāb 'The Book' under Ibn Rammāk. He learned Ḥadīth 'traditions,' and fiqh 'jurisprudence' under the judge ʿIyāḍ, a great Moroccan Ḥadīth expert. In addition to that, he studied ʿilm al-kalām 'scholastic theology,' medicine, arithmetic, and geometry. His biographers state that he was, however, most distinguished in the Arabic language and grammar.

Thus, most of Ibn Maḍāʾ' s education was in Andalusia which was, together with some parts of the Maghrib under al-murābiṭīn²⁹ 'Almoravid' control. Almoravid governors preferred the Mālikī madhhab 'sect' and tried to avoid any scholars who were not specialized in the primary and secondary principles of that sect. At the same time,

there was another movement which had been founded in the Maghrib by Ibn Tūmart, namely al-muwaḥḥidīn 'Almohad'.³⁰ Ibn Tūmart died in 524/1129, unsuccessful in his attempts to overthrow the Almoravid government. However, ʿAbd al-Muʿmin b. ʿAlī (d. 558/1162) was able to control the Maghrib and most of Andalusia and so is considered the actual founder of the Almohad Dynasty.

The Almohad governors did not believe in the secondary principles of the Mālikites; on the contrary, they believed in the ṣāḥirites and, thus, started calling on the people to go back to the origins of the Qurʾān and the Sunnah and to avoid the disputes created by the fugahāʾ 'jurisprudents.'

Ibn Maḍāʾ³¹ got a kātib 'writer' position in 551/1155 at the time of Abd al-Muʿmin b. Alī, who ordered him to accompany his son Alī b. Abd al-Muʿmin to Fez. After the death of Abd al-Muʿmin b. Alī in 558/1149, Yūsuf b. Abd al-Muʿmin served as Caliph until 580/1183. During that period Ibn Maḍāʾ returned to Andalusia and was assigned in 563/1167 as Shaykh to Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm b. Abd al-Muʿmin who was the governor of Cordova. After that, Ibn Maḍāʾ accepted the position of judge of Bougie in most probably 569/1173.

In 571/1175, Ibn Maḍāʾ became qāḍī al-jamāʿa³² 'chief judge' of the Almohads and served in the same position until he fell ill in 583/1186 and could not continue his duties. This had Abu Yaʿqūb Yūsuf (became Caliph in 580